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S P E E C H

OF

HON. R. K. MEADE, OF VIRGINIA,

ON THE

ADMISSION OF CALIFORNIA AS A STATE.

DElIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 6, 1850.

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## THE CALIFORNIA QUESTION.

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In Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the President's Message relating to California.

Mr. MEADE said:

Members who rise to make a speech on this floor, invariably complain of the hour rule. I have but one remark to make about it. The foundation on which our institutions rest, is truth and knowledge. These are elicited by argument and discussion. We have denied ourselves these means, on all great questions; hence the eyes of the people are turned to another branch of the Federal Legislature, who permits itself to use the weapons by which error is to be conquered. We hide our lights under a bushel, our dignity and importance are diminishing every day, and the people turn from their immediate Representatives to seek light elsewhere.

I might not have addressed this committee at all, Mr. Chairman, but for the notice which has been so frequently taken of a speech which I delivered in August last to my constituents, copies of which I sent to the members of this House. My object in sending that speech I wish to be known. The Representatives of the South—myself particularly—had been accused of misrepresenting their constituents' feelings and sentiments on the various questions involving the rights of the South; and I wished to show to gentlemen here, especially from the North, what were the feelings of my own people. The State egotism displayed in that speech, has been the subject of remark, and of playful sarcasm, by gentlemen from the North, and I must make my acknowledgments to the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. FITCH] for a little of it. Had that speech been made on this floor, much which I said would have been out of place, and betrayed a want of good taste. But gentlemen must remember, I was speaking to and among my own people. Nothing is more common here than national egotism; our glorious Confederacy, and unmatched greatness and virtues, are the theme of every speaker. It would be exceedingly ill-bred, and even offensive, to speak thus in a foreign country. We in Virginia, and among ourselves, sometimes push that national propensity to the extent of glorifying ourselves.

The gentleman from Indiana did me the justice to say that the facts upon which I founded in part my conclusions were true, but did not venture to show that those conclusions were not legitimate.

Neither did the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. ASHMUN,] who admitted and commented upon the same facts. It would be fair for me to infer they admitted my conclusions, did I not perceive it was the object of the one to make party capital of it at home, and of the other to indulge his vein of satire, and perhaps to add a little food to the anti-slavery feeling of his constituents. I should have been pleased had those gentlemen turned their attention to the object I had in adducing the facts on which they commented, and the truth of which they admitted. Slavery had been denounced by the North as a moral, political, and social evil; to disprove it I instituted a comparison between the northern and southern population, founded on facts; and when I said that the destinies of this country had for fifty years been controlled by southern men, I saw nothing at which the North could justly take exception, for it occurred by reason of *their* votes; for notwithstanding the malign influences of slavery we had the right sort of men; the North perceived it and chose them to preside over the nation. Amidst the calumnies that are daily levelled at us, we have a right to point to these facts, and boast of our exemption from those political and moral deformities which beset northern society. We have a right, too, to glory in the fact, that the two brightest and purest characters of the past and the present age, were both heritors of "the institution," and died patriarchs amidst a hundred slaves. Among the other charges is that also of aristocratic arrogance; and this, too, is sometimes preferred by Democrats, forgetful of the fact that we not only furnished them the great Apostle of Democracy, but have in fact ever since borne its cross high above the heads of its enemies—a cross that would have long since been trailing in the dust had it trusted itself to northern support. Sir, the South is the *Democratic portion of the Union*; and in truth there is more equality among the whites of the South than exists anywhere else. We are all elevated (not dragged down) upon the same platform; and let me tell you, sir, negro slavery is the cause of it. If it has made aristocrats of any of us, it has made us all aristocrats, so we may be called a democratic aristocracy.

We are accused, too—especially we Virginians—of engrossing all the offices in the country. Virginians are so fond of hailing from the place of their nativity, that I was at first induced to doubt that charge, and to believe that Virginia was improp-

erly credited with many offices that had in fact been conferred upon citizens of other States, growing out of the fact that the "Blue Book" only designated the birth-place of each office-holder. While I was in this state of uncertainty, I met with a very talented and distinguished preacher of the Episcopal Church, who was also an agent of the Colonization Society. He told me he thought there might be some foundation for the charge; for in Liberia, there was a general complaint that the "Virginny niggers" held all the offices. This information, taken in connection with another fact frequently mentioned here, that there were more natives of Virginia on this floor than of any other State—in connection, too, with yet another fact, that the Chief Magistrate of the nation was also a Virginian by birth—and yet another, that the great captain of the age, who commands our armies, is a Virginian,—taking all these things together, I determined to dismiss the subject from my mind, and abandon the old Commonwealth, in these days of her degeneracy, to her misfortunes. Sir, there must be something in her climate, or her *peculiar institutions*, that infects her children of both races. But amidst all these causes of complaint, I scarcely meet with an emigrant from Virginia that does not boast of his birth-place. The gentleman from Ohio even, [Mr. CAMPBELL,] though remotely descended, took care to inform us, while abusing our institutions, that his genealogical tree first struck its roots in the Old Dominion.

Mr. Chairman, a few weeks back I picked up a speech made by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. STEVENS,] containing a paragraph beginning with these words: "Let us pause a moment over this humiliating confession," and ending with these: "This is his picture, not mine." Now, sir, to say nothing of the utter disregard of truth betrayed in the last words, and speaking only in reference to the indelicate scurrility of the paragraph, which prevents my quoting it at length, permit me to say, in justice to the State of Pennsylvania, that if her canine inhabitants had a vocabulary among them, I believe there is not a kennel outside of the Lancaster district that would not expel a member who would disgrace the brotherhood by such low vulgarity.

But, sir, I turn with loathing and disgust from this subject, and will give a few moments to the comments made by the gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. STANLY,] on this speech of mine. There seems to be but one sentiment in that speech which was lucky enough to draw forth the approbation of the honorable gentleman, and that one every Abolitionist in the House would assent to. The conjunction of these two signs in the political zodiac, inclines me now to doubt the correctness of the sentiment.

A great deal which fell from the lips of the honorable gentleman I will not attempt to reply to. But there was scarcely a paragraph quoted by the gentleman that he fairly dealt with; nothing which I said reflected on the noble Castilian race. I spoke of the Mexican race. I said nothing from which he could infer that a man was elevated in proportion to the number of his slaves; nothing from which the gentleman could infer that Virginia slave-owners raised negroes to sell. I stated nothing but facts—facts as applicable to his State as to mine. He has volunteered an inference which involves his own constituents as deeply as my

own, and from which I must vindicate them. The fact that the price of slaves in Virginia and North Carolina materially depends on the price of cotton and the southern demand, cannot be denied. Stop that demand, they would suddenly fall, and continue to fall as their numbers increase. Their profits in Virginia and North Carolina do not justify and could not sustain their present prices. The fact, therefore, is undeniable, that their "value is chiefly dependent upon southern demand," and therefore, (the gentleman from North Carolina would say,) the owners of slaves thus situated raise them to sell, and he "would be ashamed to own such a constituent." Now if the gentleman's inference is the true one, then it is time for his blushes to appear; but I deny emphatically the legitimacy or truth of his conclusions. They are not true of my constituents, nor do I believe them true in respect to his. Every southern man well knows that the last piece of property which a southerner will part from is the slave which he raised, or which descended to him from his father. When he is forced to sell his property, every other kind goes first, while the sharer of his childhood's sports, or the being whom he has raised from infancy, is clung to with the regard almost of a brother or a parent. Hence it is, that notwithstanding the allurements of a price double his real worth, which the southern planter offers, a slave is scarcely ever sold in Virginia, except from necessity or misconduct. When that is the case, the southern planters, through their agents, who alone can afford the price, are generally the only bidders, and the slave is taken to the South; and thus the increase of the population in Virginia and North Carolina is prevented. Sometimes our own people buy them at sales, and privately of one another, moved thereto by various motives, but nineteen out of twenty who are sold are taken to the South.

These are facts—facts that I could not conceal, nor would I if I could; for when the discussion and agitation of this question of slavery have so far impressed me as to incline me to deny a fact which exists, or even to endeavor to conceal it, I shall do one of two things: persuade my people to abolish the institution, or quit the home of my fathers and seek a more congenial latitude. But, Mr. Chairman, does not the gentleman from North Carolina overrate his sensibilities, when he said he would be ashamed of a constituent who would breed a slave to sell? He says he has none such. I presume the gentleman has constituents who buy to sell; can he draw a sensible distinction in their favor? Now, sir, Virginia and North Carolina have a number of people who are engaged in this business; and though their calling is condemned by many, yet they are a very useful class of people to both States, in keeping within bounds the black population. They are just the same class of citizens that were regarded with some favor once at the North, when it was preparing for the attacks they are now making on the South. This speech scarcely did justice to the gentleman's constituents, when he admitted there was any "laboring population so well taken care of as our slaves are." The poor-house population of the North proves a previous destitution to which our slaves are strangers; and I will venture to assert of the gentleman's district, as I can confidently of my own, (where there are now fifty thousand

slaves,) that there is not one who is without the necessities and even comforts of life.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot bestow much more of my time upon the speech of the gentleman from North Carolina. Its object seemed to be to defend the North, and to show we are in no danger from its hostility. He says, "no man in his senses believes Congress will ever be guilty of the outrage or the folly of abolishing slavery in this District, excepting of course those fanatics who think the Constitution is an agreement with hell."

Not much more than a year before these remarks were made, there had been a vote taken here on this very question, in its most offensive shape, and seventy-nine out of one hundred and ten northern Representatives present, on a test vote, voted in favor of the measure, and but thirty-one against it. Not one-third of the northern vote present could be found who would vote against a bill to submit to the slaves of the District the question of their own emancipation; and the accidental absence of thirty members from the South would insure the passage of any measure which an Abolitionist would dare to bring forward. If there be disunionists in the country they have never had more cause to rejoice than now. The inevitable tendency of events is to separation or southern subjection. If there be any real friends to union, I mean union on fair and equal terms, now is the time for them to step forward, or it will soon be too late; there is a spirit of inquiry already excited by these discussions, which will progress until the value of this Union to its last copper will be ascertained. It is a species of childhood or dotage for men in this age of investigation and inquiry, to speak of anything's being too sacred to discuss. It is the philosophy of the age to inquire into the value of everything. And if this Union is of such inestimable value, let us know why and wherefore, that we may be prepared with the sacrifice necessary to defend it. Gentlemen from the North have set us the example in this particular. They have calculated the value of the Union, and also the value of the Wilmot proviso, and they have pronounced the latter worth the most. Even the conservatives from the North, for the most part, have pronounced in favor of the proviso, or something equivalent; they will take nothing less whatever may be the hazard. Now, sir, shall we hold our rights, our equality, our honor, at a lower price, than they do the Wilmot proviso? How stands the case? The North has only to abstain from the commission of any act to preserve the harmony of this Union. On doing this she suffers neither in character nor purse, and the Constitution is not even threatened. The South, on the contrary, must submit to a violation of the Constitution, perpetual inferiority, self-abasement, and wear the badge of a cowardly bragadocio the rest of her days.

While we are abused by the North for not giving freedom to our slaves, we witness every day conduct on their part which is a complete vindication of our policy: In some of the States they require of them bond and security for good behavior. They cannot vote or serve on a jury. The common right of self-government is denied them, and in some places the manumitted slaves of other States are driven from among them by force of arms. Now, sir, if Ohio was unwilling to receive in her territory a few hundred slaves

from Virginia, emancipated by the will of one whose reputation and character as an orator and statesman had become national property, is it not an unequivocal declaration on her part, that Virginia is right in keeping her slaves in bondage? And if she is unwilling to add a few hundred to her free black population, can she consistently blame Virginia for objecting to half a million?

If it be a principle of philanthropy which actuates our northern brethren, I would address this question to it. Suppose these identical three million of blacks now in America were at this time in Africa, and had been born there of the same progenitors, would their moral, religious, or physical condition be as good as it now is? Twenty-five years from now there will be six millions of slaves. Is it material to humanity whether they be diffused over the present fifteen slave States and California, or be confined to the fifteen States? Humanity would unquestionably decide in favor of diffusion. But these philanthropists would say, slavery is a curse, and we wish to save California from it. Save the land of California? Is the land a sensitive being? They might say no, but we wish to save the future inhabitants of California from the evils of that institution. If humanity is the governing consideration, then they must state an account between the people of the fourteen slave-States and the people of California; and if the evil saved to them is precisely the increase of that evil inflicted by this means on the original fifteen, then what does humanity gain?

Now, in order to justify the course pursued by the North, and relieve them of the suspicion of merely seeking political power, they must show that, by confining the area of slavery, the number of slaves will be diminished, or at least their increase retarded.

I have heard some of my southern friends contend, that extending the bounds will not add to the number of slaves. In this I differ with them; and the law which governs the case, is well understood by our northern brethren, and that law, hard as it is, they are looking to, in the course of time, for the ultimate accomplishment of their purposes. It is the law which prevents procreation in all densely-inhabited countries—that of hard usage, stint, and starvation. To proclaim this to the world, would disarm fanaticism, while a shriek of horror would rise from the lips of outraged humanity. Hence, they are silent; the masses are deceived, and the finest chords of the human heart are made to discourse music at the touch of hypocrisy. This is the whole game which they confidently believe will end, at no distant day, either in equality and amalgamation, or a war of extermination between the races. The more kind-hearted, in view of the power which California, Oregon, New Mexico, and a third of Texas will hereafter give them, and the convenient doctrine of obligations superior to the Constitution, lately broached in the Senate, may perhaps contemplate a more speedy and less bloody termination to the conflict.

There are men, sir, now listening to my voice, who, while singing peans to the Union, are coolly calculating these chances; and there are some among us so fascinated with the song, like charmed birds, they are utterly unconscious of the deadly gaze of the serpent that is drawing them every day closer and closer to his folds.

Mr. Chairman, I see the danger before me. My race and my country are threatened; we are even now engaged in the death-struggle. We must come to terms with the enemy, or we must either fall or triumph in the conflict. The terms must be such as to give us security. The war against our institutions has been declared—we must protect them; a promise is no protection while the power to destroy remains. The terms of peace must put us beyond the reach of the enemy, or the peace is deceptive. We must retain the power of self-protection, or we must finally yield. What will give us this power? Space—empire. In other words, we must secure a certain share of this continent that will inspire respect and fear in case of future conflicts. We must have enough to make us a powerful nation if we should be driven to a separate existence. This war against slavery did not begin to-day, nor will it end to-morrow; nor will it ever end, until African slavery is put beyond the reach of its enemies. I say, then, to the South, stretch your arm to the Pacific; let no enemy flank you, or take post in your rear. You can save yourself if you will. Besides your millions of people, you have a means of defence in your productions more than equal to a standing army of one hundred thousand men. Half the civilized world depends upon you, whose supplies you can stop without even feeling the shock that would prostrate millions. With such advantages, what recreancy, what imbecility, what cowardice will be yours, should you fail to secure to yourselves and your children a position which will hereafter render you impregnable. To effect this you have only to demand half your rights—half justice. To the Pacific, then, I say—to the Pacific. Your future security depends entirely upon your own strength; secure to yourselves while you can, an empire. When California and New Mexico and Oregon are settled up with an anti-slavery population, the pressure will become too powerful for resistance. Keep this population in your front, and look to the southern portion of this continent as your exclusive domain. Our race is destined to spread itself over the whole of it, and it rests with you to say whether the future rulers of Mexico shall be friends or foes to our institutions.

This controversy between the North and South is not without its good. It is an admirable feeler by which we can judge of the future designs of our northern brethren. If they prefer this proviso to the Union—if their hostility to our institutions is thus inveterate, then we shall be compelled to break at once a bond, which at no distant day must either fly asunder, or become manacles to our hands, and fetters to our feet.

I have heard some say, that there was no blessing greater than union—no evil so great as disunion. Sir, the sentiment is not only cowardly, but it is high treason against liberty and the rights of man. Union without equality, will enslave us. The opinions of Mr. Jefferson are often quoted against the South. Sir, I wish to derive no advantages from concealing or perverting a fact. When the Federal Constitution was formed, I believe that most of the statesmen of the South looked to the ultimate abolition of slavery, and to that end they strove against that clause which permitted the importation of slaves, until the year 1808. But the North insisted on the provision with a view to commercial profit. I have heard this gravely claimed

as a concession to the South. In 1788 our slave population did not much exceed a half million; emancipation could then have been effected, and was no doubt contemplated by southern statesmen. This provision, however insisted on by the North, postponed the time when slaves should not be imported from Africa to the year 1808, at which time they had, from propagation and importations, swelled up to twelve hundred thousand. Virginia had then become so encumbered with the population, she had no alternative but to continue them in slavery or make of them a decidedly more degraded population—that is, a lazy, thievish, free negro population, such as the North now has. The whole of the abuse, therefore, which is lavished upon their southern brethren recoils upon the memory of the speaker's own ancestors; and I have often asked myself, where is that pride of ancestry which is usually the most cherished sentiment of an American bosom.

There is but one way of explaining this apparent insensibility to national and ancestral pride. We are told that a half million of emigrants are annually added at the North to the number of American citizens. Now, I am somewhat curious to know how many of those eloquent friends of humanity and denouncers of their southern brethren are really Americans or can boast even of an American father? The answer to this question may go far to explain the *warm brotherly* feeling and sympathies so often and so *courteously* manifested towards us by our dearly beloved brethren from the land of snows.

These men affect great love for the Union, though it ties them to a *national disgrace*. Do they suppose they cultivate a corresponding attachment at the South, by so often bestowing upon us the epithets of slave-drivers, bloody tyrants, and dealers in human flesh? Why, sir, there is not a man from the South who, if he be a man, does not at times feel his attachment to this Union giving away under a disgust of their associations here so redolent of abuse, vulgarity, and malignity. Why, sir, if all our constituents could come here and sit in these halls for three weeks, not long enough to become hardened to abuse as we have, and under the fresh influence of their feelings, were called upon to vote between union and disunion, you would find one-third of them voting for the latter, another third sitting in silent indifference, while the rest, under the influence of the parting advice of the great slave-breeding, slave-driving tyrant, George Washington, would say, let us try the thing a little longer—we may yet restore the old fraternal love which united into one the hearts of our forefathers.

Mr. Chairman, southern fanaticism is sometimes spoken of. Did you ever know fanaticism to be a passive, defensive feeling? That is not its nature. The North goad us with abuse, throw fire-brands in our dwellings, threaten to yoke the whites with the blacks of the South, and, because we turn upon them, they call us fanatics. Slavery would never be mentioned here but for them. Fanaticism never asks to be let alone, as we ask them. It is an active, aggressive principle, ever at work, and demanding something to be done. The majority principle is often appealed to here, and we are represented as denying the rights of a majority. Why, sir, is it possible that the principles of our confederation, at this late day, are so

little understood? Will gentlemen contend that the people of New York, because they are two and a half millions, can come to Virginia and alter her constitution, or deprive her of any of her rights, because they are but a million and a half, upon the principle of a majority? Can all the States combined do it as a matter of right? Gentlemen will scarcely say aye to this. Well, sir, suppose Virginia and New York had formed a union with limited powers and for specified objects, or suppose France and Spain were to form a similar union, would it be contended that because New York in the one case, or France in the other, had a majority, they could exercise any power they please? The very organization of this House and of the other condemns the doctrine. How can gentlemen contend that the majority principle must govern here, when Delaware can neutralize the vote of New York? Were we one community, living under one government, instead of being a confederation of independent States for specified objects, then the majority principle would be the correct one. But each State became a member of this Union for its own good. If the majority use it as the means of injuring instead of protecting, the obligation of the injured ceases and she may resume her original independent position. Now for the application of the principle: Mexico committed an outrage, an injury, upon all the States of the Union, and the Union demanded and obtained indemnity for the injury; the indemnity inures to all, for all were injured. What was that indemnity? Territory which thus became a part and parcel of the United States, that is, a part of each State in the Union. Can this be denied? Then California is a part of Virginia; can Congress abolish slavery in a part of Virginia? But, you will reply, California is a part of New York, and she has abolished slavery. Now, here is a case where two States have equal rights, and they come in conflict; both States are equal, and neither will yield. There is but one of three modes of settlement—a fight, or backing out, or a division. Now, will any man in his senses say, that New York would have a right to dictate, because she had more people? Why, sir, the same principle would have given to England the whole of Oregon. Now, sir, Oregon presents a case in point. Had we, supposing we were all slave States, no right to take slaves to Oregon during the joint occupancy? The answer is obvious.

While on this subject I will give you my opinion in regard to the legislative power of Congress over the territories. Sir, Congress alone has any power. The people of the territories have none, while in a state of dependence. You might as well contend, that a boy (while being protected and supported by his father) was a man. Of course, the feelings and wishes of both ought to be respected, and if they are not, they may rebel and set up for themselves, if they be strong enough; but while they live upon the bounty, and under the protection of the parent, they must obey.

But what is the extent of that authority? Ascertain the object for which the Union was formed, and limit its authority by it. This furnishes the key to the whole question. All the powers of Congress on this subject are implied. The object of the Union was not to benefit mankind generally. No, sir; it was more specific. It was to promote the good of each individual member,—not of one, or

a majority, but of each. And Congress can by implication exercise no power which will affect injuriously a single member of the Confederacy. And Congress can with as much propriety say to Virginia, you shall emancipate your slaves because they are an evil, as to say to her, you shall not take them to your part of California because they are an evil. As I said before, the mission of Congress is specific, not general. And when the interests of the States come in conflict, it is the duty of Congress to take part with neither, but do justice to all. In this case, as the subject cannot be enjoyed in common, and neither has a right to all, it must be equitably divided among them; otherwise any citizen of the United States may settle in the territory with any species of property which any State recognizes as such. It appears to me that those peculiar guardians of human rights, whose bosoms are so distended with philanthropy, could find an ample field for its exercise in their own neighborhoods. They are much distressed at the ignorance of our people, and profess unutterable sympathy at their uninstructed minds. The revelations of the last census are themes of never-ending speculations. They hold up their hands in holy horror at the thought that in Virginia one in every fourteen adults cannot read or write. I am not afraid to compare situations with New York and Massachusetts, and the world shall decide between them. The statistics of those States show, in the first place, that every seventeenth or twentieth person is a pauper; in the second place, that one in fourteen of every inhabitant in Boston and New York is under arrest for crime during the year. So that for every citizen of Virginia who is ignorant of books, we will show you two in New York and Boston, one of whom is a pauper, and the other either a convict or upon his trial.

Mr. Chairman: When I took my seat in this Congress, it was with a consciousness that at no period of our history, since the adoption of the Constitution, did a weightier responsibility rest upon the members of this body—at no period did more important and momentous consequences depend upon its action. More than sixty years ago, moved by a common interest and a sense of weakness, the people of thirteen separate and independent sovereignties, whose novel principles of government were at war with those of every other nation, and too feeble to resist separately the aggressions which they might anticipate, determined to unite their energies for mutual defence, and established a Government, clothed with such powers only as they supposed were necessary to secure this the grand object. Those who established this Government, sensible of the variety—I may say contrariety—of interest which must grow out of a difference in soil, climate, and pursuits, endeavored to throw around each community such protection and safeguards as would suffice to secure to each its own individuality, and prevent any action which did not tend to the good of all. To this end was the limitation of its powers. To this end was the equality of representation, as States, in one branch of the Legislature; and to the same end was a greater and disproportionate weight given to the smaller communities, and to the slaveholding States, in the choice of a Chief Magistrate; and for the same purpose, a concurrent vote of two-thirds of these communities was required to make

any addition to the powers already granted. The good of each, and the common good of all, was the sole object; and this constituted the fundamental condition—the basis of this confederacy of States. This condition is therefore violated by any action by which either community is injured, or by which a greater benefit is secured to one or more, over the rest. It is idle to speak of the constitutional right of the Government to do this or that thing. It is vain to speak of the legitimate signification of words. If an injury be done to any member of the Union by the action of the common Government—if more is intentionally given to one portion than to another, or equal protection withheld, the main object of the compact is defeated as to the injured, and the condition upon which she became a party, and upon which it was to remain a party, has been broken; and thus ejected, as it were, from the common estate, its future safety and security becomes its individual and peculiar province to look to.

No State in this Union would have become a party to it, with the understanding that its future fate was to be under the control of the rest. The object of each was to benefit itself. That failing, the obligations under it are at an end.

No one will say that this Confederacy would ever have existed, if the present state of things had been foreseen. What state of things? The property of half this Union is secretly invaded. It is carried into another half, and there the thieves are openly protected by the panoply, not merely of public sentiment, but of law. The injured, in pursuit of his rights, is arrested, incarcerated, and sometimes murdered with impunity; ingenious devices are resorted to by sworn officers to evade the plain provisions of the Constitution; and if sometimes they are fortunate enough to obtain a judicial recognition of their rights, the redress is but nominal, for an appeal is taken to the community at large, which often reverses the judgment, and strips the owner of his property. It is no answer to say that this is unauthorized by law. It is, in some cases, encouraged by the law. But when a community cannot restrain wrong, it is itself responsible, and is identified with the general sentiment. If the people of New York were to make repeated inroads upon Canada—if they were in the habit weekly of sacking the cities of Quebec and Montreal, the demand of Great Britain would not be satisfied by telling her these forays were contrary to law. She would say to New York, "If you are unable to restrain your people, I must:" and reprisals would follow. The burning of the Caroline was an application of this principle, perhaps too promptly made. When a majority of a community becomes so imbued with violence and wrong as to prevent the passage of requisite laws, or to defy them when passed—as to shield the perpetrators of wrong—the community itself then becomes the aggressor, and responsible for the injury. But, sir, the point of the argument is this: Should a peaceful community—can a peaceful community long continue in amity and union with one that is lawless? Sir, it is no inducement that there are some honest men among them: unless they are strong enough to control the wicked, they must all rank alike.

I could here dwell on the moral depravity of that people, who would thus set aside the most sacred obligations, and even boast of acts which

involve them in the two-fold guilt of perjury and plunder.

But, sir, this is not the outrage, as great as it is, which requires the speediest remedy, and of which we complain as being the most dangerous to our future peace. Our ears have been filled for the last fifteen years with an abuse and scurrility, of which it is difficult to conceive that the most vulgar breeding could teach the tongue utterance. And it strikes a southern mind with surprise, that anywhere in this great country of ours, a person in a responsible station could be found vulgar enough to speak in terms so essentially low and ill-bred as those we sometimes hear on this floor.

But, sir, this is an offence against taste and good breeding, and if it was only productive of the mirth it excites in congenial souls, and the disgust which it never fails to create in a gentleman's bosom, it might be past by as a crime that brings with it its own punishment. But, sir, the object of all this is to sow discontent in the hearts of a quiet and contented race, to render the master's life a torture, and to stir up insurrections and assassinations.

He is told that by nature the negro is equal to the white man, and entitled to all his rights and privileges, while, at the same time, the laws made by these very men deny him all the means by which these rights are to be enjoyed. Self-government is essential to freedom, but suffrage is denied him, and he is bound to submit to laws which others prescribe. The pursuit of happiness is another unalienable right. The highest enjoyment in life, next to an unstained conscience, is a free access to the honors of the country and to the best and most refined societies. To these the negro is admitted only as a menial. Life is permitted to him, but it is poisoned at every turn by marks of degradation, legal and social. The Temple of Liberty is shown him, its gates are opened, but he cannot pass its threshold. He sees its internal order and beauty, and his appreciation of them is exaggerated by a fancy stimulated by denial. Now indeed he is conscious he is a slave, and he sighs and weeps.

The happiest and most cheerful people on earth, are the negroes of the South. They understand the decree pronounced against the descendants of Ham, and they are content to abide it. They believe they are born to serve the white man, and they do it cheerfully: to be called a faithful servant, is a highly-prized reward, and a good and just master is a negro's pride. The joys of the present hour are his, the cares of the future are his master's. Would you impose upon him the one and deprive him of the other? then liberate him. To this end all your efforts tend. With the prevailing prejudices against the race, your most successful efforts could have but one termination—to wake him up from a blissful ignorance to a painful consciousness of his slavery. Into this population the agitators of the North are seeking to infuse the spirit of insurrection and massacre.

When Mr. Jefferson said that "mankind were not born with saddles on their backs, with a few booted and spurred, to ride them legitimately by the grace of God," he spoke more like a philanthropist than a philosopher. Unfortunately, even with us, this is only a political truth; socially, it is not true. In all countries where the laws of property prevail, the few who are rich make slaves of the poor in a certain sense—through their

necessities they make them do the most menial services; and they are deprived not alone of the elegances and luxuries of life, but often of its comforts, and a sense of inferiority weighs more heavily upon them than the negro's slavery. The slave who cleans my boots and brushes my coat, does it with alacrity, and feels honored in the office; the white man had rather wear them than clean them; he sighs at his inferior condition and longs to exchange places with his employer. The African slave feels a natural inferiority, and is contented to abide the decree of nature. Not so the white man—he feels his equality, and is ever disposed to assert it. His condition he attributes to the wrongs of society, and longs to avenge them. Give him the power and he will make the effort. Whenever the density of numbers makes their comforts less and their necessities harder, then commences that war between capital and labor, whose low mutterings are even now audible in some of the densely-settled States. It has been plainly threatened even in this House. Take care, gentlemen, that we (whose property you are now warring upon) will not be soon implored to save you from the consequences of your own rashness. You are comparatively safe, while population is sparse and a living easily acquired—while the laborer of to-day can hope to be the capitalist of to-morrow; with but one in a hundred is this hope, even now, ever realized. Whenever, from increase of numbers, labor can only supply the current necessities of the hour, then your day of trouble will have come. Capital and labor with us are united; with you it is separate, with antagonistical feelings. The black horse that we are riding is a docile and willing animal—the white one that you have saddled is restive and impatient. Ours will keep us above the mud, yours may drag you into it—beware! This is the philosophy of the remark I made on another occasion, when I said "negro slavery elevates the white man." Men of sense will understand the reasoning. And here let me not be misunderstood. Let it not be supposed that labor at the South is performed altogether by the slave. There are pursuits requiring bodily exertion which the white man freely and proudly performs. Agricultural labors and the mechanical arts are actively pursued by a majority of our people, and their products are equal, if not superior to the labor of any other people; but I confess, there are certain menial employments which the white man shrinks from, and for which the negro slave is fitted to perform, and which must be performed by some one.

We are told by the kindly-disposed at the North, that even there, these men, these agitators, are a despised race, and that they are few and insignificant in numbers. Sir, facts that are transpiring every day, convince me of the contrary. These men habitually use a language on this floor towards both Whigs and Democrats from the North, which evince a consciousness they are sustained by the masses; and though they often use the language of insolent defiance towards those who are disposed to bring this quarrel between North and South to an amicable settlement, I do not hear from the latter the withering rebuke such language deserves. And, sir, I find, moreover, the body of the northern vote going with them on all questions that are dividing the North from the South.

If the Abolitionists speak truly when they say they will not interfere with slavery in the States, I would ask wherein do they differ with the other great parties except in organization? All are for the Wilmot proviso—all for abolition in the District—all for agitation here. When I say all, I mean the great body of the representation. There are honorable exceptions here, whose names will go to posterity, as pure patriots and wise statesmen. From the agitation of this question here the South must be protected. No settlement of this question can protect the South, which leaves open this avenue of attack. Our State laws protect us from incendiaries, and so must the laws of Congress. There was an effort made once to do so, but it failed. Since that time the progress of abolition has been so certain and successful that a newspaper has been established here by the Abolitionists—pouring poison daily into the negro's heart, and stirring him up to deeds of violence. The spirit of this people has been sadly changed, and the Abolitionist boasts of it. A few years ago this editor would not have been seen here twenty-four hours after his first number appeared. No one can doubt that the purpose of this agitation is to stir up the slave and incite him to efforts for his liberation.

I have expressed the opinion, formed on close observation, that no Abolitionist would venture to propose a measure here that would not now receive three-fourths of the northern vote; and the absence of only one-half or a third of the southern vote would insure the passage of the most obnoxious measure that fanaticism has ever ventured to propose; and the most ominous feature in the matter is, that many gentlemen reluctantly give these votes, which shows, not individual opinion from which we might be protected, but the opinion of the constituency from which there is no protection. Let us go back only two years, and analyze the votes that have been taken on the slavery question in its various phases.

At the 1st session of the 30th Congress:

Mr. TUCK presented a petition to appropriate the proceeds of the public lands to extinguish slavery in the United States.

Mr. GAYLE moved to lay it on the table—yeas 86, nays 70. There were twenty-six northern yeas, or about one-fourth.—(See *Congressional Globe*, page 82.)

At the same session,

Mr. PUTNAM offered a resolution to interdict slavery from all territory to be acquired from Mexico.

Mr. BRODHEAD moved to lay on the table—yeas 105, nays 92. There were twenty-eight yeas from the North, or less than a fourth.—(See *Congressional Globe*, p. 391.)

At the same session,

Mr. GIDDINGS offered a resolution to inquire into the facts connected with the seizure of a slave by his owner, and the propriety of repealing all laws sustaining the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

Mr. GAYLE moved to lay this resolution on the table—yeas 85, nays 86—seventeen yeas from the North, not a sixth; it was subsequently laid on the table by a small majority.—(See *Congressional Globe*, p. 179.)

At the second session same Congress,

Mr. Root offered a resolution to instruct the

Committee on Territories to report a bill, with as little delay as practicable, to prohibit slavery in New Mexico and California.

Mr. HALL moved to lay the resolution on the table—yeas 80, nays 107. There were but twelve northern yeas, or about one-tenth. The resolution was afterwards adopted by the same vote, and a motion by Mr. ROBINSON to reconsider was laid on the table, by a vote of 105 to 83—only twelve northern votes, or one-tenth voting in the negative.—(See *Congressional Globe*, p. 55.)

At the same session an unprecedented outrage was attempted.

Mr. GIDDINGS introduced a bill on notice to submit the question of abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia to all the inhabitants over twenty-one years old, including slaves and free negroes.

This resolution probed the abolition sentiment deeper than it ever had been. The bill was on its third reading, and on the motion of Mr. THOMPSON, of Mississippi, to lay the bill on the table, but thirty-one northern Representatives, out of one hundred and ten, or less than one-third, voted for the motion.—(See *Congressional Globe*, pp. 55, 56.)

At the same session,

Mr. GOTTMAN moved to instruct the Committee on the District of Columbia to report a bill to abolish the slave trade, prefacing it with an offensive and insulting preamble.

Mr. HARALSON moved to lay this resolution on the table, which was refused by a vote of 81 yeas to 85 nays—fifteen northern members, or about one-seventh, voting for it.

On the demand for the previous question the vote stood, 113 yeas to 63 nays.

Some of the northern members complained of the South for voting for the previous question. On examination, however, it appears that but twenty-eight southerners voted for it and eighty-five northerners; against it was forty southern and but twenty-three northern votes.

On the passage of the resolution the vote stood, yeas 98, nays 88—only fifteen northern members, or less than a seventh, voting no. (*Ibid.*, 83, 84.)

On the motion of Mr. ROBINSON to reconsider, the vote stood, yeas 119, nays 81; about one-third of the northern members sustaining the motion.

Mr. BOTTs then moved to lay the resolution on the table. This motion was negatived, only 15 northern Representatives voting aye.—*Congressional Globe*, page 216.

At the same session, I introduced a resolution to instruct the Committee on the Judiciary to bring in a bill to enable the South to recover fugitive slaves. On a motion to suspend the rules, only eight members from the North voted with the South, and the motion was lost by a large majority.—*Congressional Globe*, page 188.

During the present Congress, the gentleman from Ohio introduced a resolution to instruct the Committee on Territories to bring in a bill for the government of the territories, with the Wilmot proviso attached. Only thirty-two northern members voted to lay this resolution on the table, being less than a fourth of the whole number. Now, sir, in the face of all these votes, embracing the most ultra anti-slavery propositions, commanding more than three-fourths of the northern vote,

some gentlemen profess to believe there is no danger to the South or to the Union. Sir, I repeat, if there be any disunionists here, they have cause to rejoice in the prospect before them. There seems to be but one alternative, and that is, the submission of the South.

These votes clearly show the real strength of the Abolitionists. Now, sir, view all these votes in connection with the scenes of last session, when a majority of this House, at the imminent hazard of leaving the Government without means, and of the Union itself, determined to ingraft the proviso on the appropriation bill. View them in connection with the torrents of abuse that is daily poured into southern ears, showing a disposition to drive us out of the Union, or degrade us, and then say, Mr. Chairman, what else but a devoted attachment to this Union could have kept the South a party to it? Sir, speak not to the South about love of the Union. They have enough of it—enough. It has betrayed them into silence too long. Conscious as the North is of her ultimate purpose to drive us to the wall, she is herself astonished at our patience and ductility.

No, sir, it is not for the South now to sing peans to the Union. Let its friends at the North remind their people of its blessings. We have more sacred duties to perform, and dearer rights to protect, and our people should be reminded of them. Until our rights are respected, the appeals that I shall make to my constituents will be addressed to their sense of wrong, their pride, and manhood. When southern rights are respected, I will then join heartily in the chorus to Union.

The Abolitionists have indeed cause for triumph. The strides they have made have been rapid and are still progressing. Contrast their condition ten years ago with their present condition. Then their petitions were rejected, they were scouted by both parties, and their solitary representative in this House publicly condemned and censured. He is now surrounded by an organized party, bold, talented, and unscrupulous, whose demoniac hatred of the slaveholder might challenge the envy of the Asiatic Thug. They have their press in the midst of us here, scattering its fire-brands (as we were triumphantly told the other day) by thousands into every quarter of the Union. The South calls for legislation in vain. The fact cannot be concealed any longer, that these men are now the master spirits of this House from the North. That torrent of indignation which the lovers of this Union from the South expected would overwhelm them from the North, on account of their recent disorganizing proceedings, has been looked for in vain. They are the principal speakers from the North on this floor; and, conscious of their power, and in emulation of that arrogance which they are pleased to ascribe to the southern slaveholder, they shake their fists at the northern doughfaces, as they term the conservative Whigs and Democrats, whom they drive from their property, by holding up to their terrified imaginations exaggerated pictures of popular indignation and political graves and funerals.

Since this discussion has commenced, but few words have fallen from a northern man on this floor calculated to soothe the justly-incensed feelings of the South, or check the torrent of abuse with which she is daily assailed. When the gentleman from the 16th district of Pennsylvania

Mr. McLANAHAN] arose to address the House a few days since, we were prepared, from his known associations, to hear something conciliatory and conservative; but, as if conscious of having disappointed the expectations of his people, or done violence to northern prejudices, by abstaining from the wonted vituperations of the South, and desirous, as it would seem, to propitiate the prevailing feeling of hostility, he concluded his speech by one sweeping denunciation, by which the whole South was branded as a national stigma and disgrace. The thought was at once suggested, why do not these men at once rid themselves of this disgraceful connection. Before God, if I were of this opinion I would not consent to live another day in a connection so vile. What southerner on this floor, in view of these opinions, can doubt that the North would long since have severed these bonds, but for some cause more potent than a mere love of union—union coupled with disgrace. The sentiment of pure love of the Union for the Union's sake, is confined to the South. This is the chief cement with us—mutual weakness, which first brought us together, no longer exists. If we were now a separate people, and a proposition were made to unite with the North, what would be the arguments in its favor? Name one commercial benefit that we would derive from the connection. If it was so difficult in 1788-'89, when we numbered only 1,500,000 people, to induce our fathers to form this Union, what arguments could be adduced now to overcome that reluctance?

Let us enumerate the inducements that our northern friends would hold out:

First. They would say your exports in cotton, tobacco, sugar, rice, corn, wheat, oats, peas, early vegetables and fruits, tar, pitch, turpentine, lumber, and a hundred of other things, amount to \$150,000,000; it is all carried in your own bottoms, and puts to a great deal of trouble thousands and tens of thousands of your people. Now, we will relieve you of all that, and your sons can hereafter enjoy *otium cum dignitate* upon their farms.

Secondly. Your imports amount to as much as your exports. They are brought directly into your Atlantic and gulf sea-ports. Your wharves are crowded with all sorts of goods and foreign luxuries; your towns are swelling out to inconvenient sizes; you are drawing your population from the country—converting honest, simple yeomen, into tradesmen, bringing them into contact with the vices of the city, making bad citizens of good, and thus poisoning the very vitals of your Republic. We will protect you from these evils by becoming your factors and agents. We will import these things for you at a reasonable percentage, and send them South in such quantities as you may need—deducting, however, a large percentage for profit.

Thirdly. You have an annual revenue of \$20,000,000, which you receive from a small duty of fifteen per cent. Now, you buy your goods so cheap, and pay for them so easy, there is danger of your becoming wasteful, prodigal, and luxurious. Moreover, ten millions of these twenty you waste and scatter among your people on schemes of improvements; thus teaching them to look to Government, instead of their labor, for support. The corrupting influence of so much money will destroy the morals of your people, and your Government will finally fall into the

hands of a corrupt set of servants, who will first plunder and then enslave the people. Now, by uniting your fate with ours, we will protect you from those evils. In the first place, we will raise the duties fifteen per cent. higher. We will supply you with half of those goods from our own factories, and on the other half we will collect as much revenue as you do upon the whole; and, instead of corrupting your people, by making railroads and canals, we will throw the whole of it on our lakes and rivers.

Fourthly. You will have the praise and satisfaction of doing acts of unparalleled magnanimity. Our people "down east" live in a cold, hard climate, upon land that is rocky, sterile, and unproductive. They cannot live in such a country unless by means of their water-power. They are able to work up your raw cotton. Your climate is genial, your soil fertile, and always yielding. You had better plough that, and let us plough the ocean with your products. Now, let us do your navigating and manufacturing, and importing, while you work your plantations. Thus, you will not only live comfortably yourselves, but you will also give us employment and the means of prosperity, which we now can only obtain by moving to the South.

Fifthly. You might safely repeal many of your police laws which are now very inconvenient to both of us. You need not examine the mails for incendiary publications. You may abolish passports between North and South, for we will take care to punish as felons those abolitionists who steal your negroes. We will restore your fugitive slaves instead of harboring them, and when you come after them, we will help you to recapture them. We will neither put you in prison nor assassinate you as we do now. Neither will we excite your slaves to rebellion or insurrection, but we will inculcate obedience. We will establish the seat of Government where you may bring your servants in safety. In fine, there shall be no strife between you and us, and united in one grand republic, we will present to the admiration of the world, in time to come, a continent of free-men under a common government, worshipping at one altar, whose constant fires shall dispel the darkness which hangs over the rest of the world, and finally conduct it out of the bondage of centuries.

I will not say, Mr. Chairman, what effect these arguments would have towards producing a union. But I am certain they would prevail to continue one already formed. I would put this question, in all seriousness, to our northern brethren: Believing, as they do, that slavery is a national disgrace, would they not unhesitatingly rid themselves of it by withdrawing from this Confederacy, but for the commercial advantages they derive from the connection? It is perfectly evident there can be no fraternity of feeling on their part towards the southern slaveholder. There can be no real desire to continue in union with men with whom they must share a disgrace, which, but for that union, they would be exempt from. And I am perfectly satisfied that nothing holds the North to the South but the millions she annually draws from her. The amount is estimated by one of her best political economists at \$88,000,000.

Since we are to pay for the privilege of remaining in this Union, is it unreasonable that we

should demand, on our part, some security against the machinations of those who are seeking to convert this great moral, physical, and political evil into a moral, physical, and political death? This great question is not to be settled by mutual defiance. The two great sections should understand what each wants, and why it wants it. It is too important a matter to be made the stakes of a game of brag. We have a national reputation for many virtues. Among others we are known to be a brave people. I should be sorry, exceedingly sorry, if I believed that character was deserved only by southern people. And when gentlemen from the North intimate that we had but a very small share of it, I had no other feeling but regret that they should feel so little like Americans. I have observed in my intercourse with men, that the bravest are generally the least jealous about their reputation for bravery, probably for the same reason that a man of wealth is least solicitous about his credit. A consciousness of perfect security on the part of both, no doubt, imparts this comparative indifference.

But, sir, the South is not moved by these insinuations. I say we should understand each other's views. The North says the South is afflicted with an evil. Now, sir, we must take care that that evil does not destroy us. And we might fairly call upon the North, by the memory of our ancestors, of their common struggles in the cause of liberty, by the bond of fraternity by which they intended to link indissolubly together the destinies of their children to the remotest posterity, to assist us in alleviating the evil with which they say we are afflicted.

But instead of assisting us, they seek to aggravate it. They avow their purpose of surrounding us with free States, and thus cut off the prospect of a gradual but certain flow and final settlement of a greater portion of this race in the warm climates of Mexico and the equatorial regions of South America. This means of relief, which is the same by which they relieved themselves, the North is disposed to deny us, and insist on girding us around with free States. Now, sir, thus stands the case. The safety of the South requires that they should spread this institution over all the regions of the South. This shocks northern sensibilities. But, sir, in fifty years from now, our slaves, if confined in their present limits, will be troublesome. We are not permitted to regard northern sensibilities. Sir, I speak plainly. It is best to strip the question of every disguise. Let the North see that the South is not contending for abstractions or shadows, but for future security. The question is far, very far, above one affecting the rights of property merely.

When the North comes fully to understand the true nature of this controversy, and that what they stake upon it, is a mere bagatelle, compared with the tremendous consequences to us, they will then duly understand two things: First, what a very small question the Union itself becomes, when weighed with the terrible results with which their policy, if carried out, is pregnant. Secondly, how inevitable and deadly must be the struggle between the North and South, if that policy is persisted in and force be applied. If the North can be made fully to understand the nature of the controversy and its inevitable bearings upon us, they will then see how silly and puerile is the charge

that we are factionists or disunionists. Why, sir, they have not raised themselves up yet to the importance of this question—they do not understand our motives or acts. The *Union* of these States was once a great political question. It was a great question when the Confederacy was formed—it was a question about systems of government. I was a great question during the times of nullification, when its blessings had to be put in one scale and a system of illegal and oppressive taxation in the other. On these occasions it was proper to remind the South of their separate weakness—of the counsels of their patriarchs—the power and glories of the grand Confederacy—and of the dreaded consequences of a dissolution. But what are these things compared with that condition in which the South will be placed fifty years from now, should northern policy triumph? Within a few thousand square miles will be cooped up twelve millions of slaves and as many white men. Free States will exist all around them. The Abolitionists in and out of Congress will wave to and fro the incendiary's torch, until the countenance of every negro will glare with demoniac hate of the white man. From the scarcity of fertile soil, his services as a slave are no longer wanted; he is permitted to roam at large, and the triumph of the Abolitionists is complete. The white man owns the land and everything called property; the negro is destitute; and if he were willing to work, there is nothing for him to do. Twelve millions are in this condition. Why should I draw out the picture any further? This is the destiny recommended to us by our northern brethren; and to divert us from its contemplation, they shout into our ears, with all its variations, the good old song of *Union, Union!*

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will venture upon an allegory, as illustrative of my feelings on this subject, and those of every southern man who will reflect.

If there be present one from the North who has a large family of children whom he loves, I would ask him, what would be his first concern, if he were to wake up in the dead hour of the night and discover his house to be on fire? To snatch his children from the flames, of course. After that, he would secure his property, beginning with the most valuable. But until the children were all safe he would not think about the valuables. Now, sir, when gentlemen talk to me about union in the present controversy, but for the gravity of the other matters involved, I should laugh at them for their simplicity. Sir, wait until the children are snatched from the flames; wait until more essential things are secured, and then, sir, we will endeavor to extinguish the flames. Those who raise the cry of the Union in the present crisis, occupy pretty much the attitude of the old woman, who cried out lustily for her bandbox, while all others were busy in snatching the inmates from the burning building, with this slight difference in favor of the old woman: those who cry out Union hold the bucket of water that would save the building.

Gentlemen ask us to turn aside from the great work before us, and consider the Union. Save that first, and then turn your attention to your honor, your equality and your safety. Sir, the power does not rest with us to save this Union—you ask an impossibility. The North alone can

ve this Union. They begat the storm, and they one can appease it. And let them reflect it is in the power of a single State to break up this Union, this question should lead to it. The hasty action a single State could throw the whole South into hostile attitude to the North.

Sir, were we to consent to submit to the terms you propose, still this Union would not be preserved; you would have something bearing the same, but no more like the Union of old, than the present government of Rome is like that of her first Consuls. Those pillars are wont to witness the assemblage of freemen from every quarter of this grand Republic; the public who sit in those galleries are wont to hear the bold and fearless voices of men who come here to speak the language of sovereign States assembled in grand council to liberate upon the welfare of all. Here in these halls the North and the South are wont to exchange their annual salutations, and, like brothers of equal birth and heritage, to confer upon those things which concern the joint honor, pride, glory, and interest of their Houses. Everybody delights to look upon this annual gathering of sovereign and independent nations. But, sir, what do you propose? You insist upon destroying this equality; you ask us to admit our inferiority, to confess to a crime which attaches to our lives, and brands us with shame. Could a southern Representative come into this hall under such circumstances without feeling that he had been spat upon and dishonored? Would not you yourselves feel reflected degradation at the association? Would you not involuntarily exclaim, where are those frank, open, generous countenances from the South, that were wont to greet us here? And when you reflected that you yourselves had exterminated this race of genial spirits, you will sit as mourners in those halls, and confess to yourselves that the old Union no longer exists.

When gentlemen say that the South desires to extend the area of slavery and multiply the number of slaves, it is manifest they have not yet comprehended the question, and are ignorant of the necessities of our situation. But, sir, we know the race is increasing and will continue to increase. They must remain in bondage or be exterminated; there be another alternative, it is their gradual appearance to the far South and Southwest. Is being the state of things, an enemy springs and tells us we must emancipate. If we do, he will force the result by circumscribing our rights and chaining as it were the two races together in the same dungeon. We will either force you to live as equals or we will place you where one or the other must be destroyed. The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. STEVENS] has dissed the designs of the North. He says:

I am opposed to the diffusion of slavery, because confining it within its present limits will bring the States themselves to its gradual abolition. Let this disease spread, and though it will render the whole body leprous and loathsome, yet it will long survive. Confine it, and like the cancer that is tending to the heart, it must be eradicated or it will eat out the vitals. The sooner the patient is convinced of this the sooner he will procure the healing operation."

And again:

The eloquent gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD] of the same opinion. He said: 'We must make up our minds either to resist the interdiction of the progress of slavery, or submit to an organic change in our institutions.'

Yes, sir, this admitted result is to my mind one of the most agreeable consequences of the legitimate restriction of

slavery. Confine this malady within its present limits, surround it by a cordon of freemen that it cannot spread, and in less than twenty-five years every slaveholding State in this Union will have on its statute books a law for the gradual and final extinction of slavery. Then will have been consummated the fondest wishes of every patriot's heart.'

In view of these threats and this inevitable fate, we are asked to submit for the sake of this glorious Union,—a Union whose labors are directed to the accomplishment of our ruin.

It cannot be concealed, sir, that this western continent is now owned by too distinct classes of men, who are rapidly arranging themselves in hostile attitude. We feel this, and we are determined to prepare for the storm that is gathering, by taking our position as to territory. We must have the southern portion of this continent for our uses; you may have the north for yours. Sir, you may settle this territorial question to-morrow to the satisfaction of all; yet there is but small progress made towards an adjustment, which shall insure perpetual peace and union. You must restore the original spirit and feeling in which this Union was made. You must moreover arrest the progress of another, which, if allowed to grow, will as certainly burst asunder those bonds, as any other effect will follow its natural cause.

Is it a common feeling at the North that slavery is a national disgrace? Answer that question in the affirmative, and I must then say, I have not words to convey my unmitigated, my utter contempt for the people who would consent to live another day with such a brand upon their foreheads. The force of this sentiment, if genuine, will ultimately drive you out of this Union, or compel you to destroy every vestige of the hated institution. No ties of self-interest can prevent the consequences of this feeling. Hence I say, this Union is not safe, and can never be safe, until the feeling which brought the fathers together, shall reanimate the bosoms of their sons. If the only bond which binds the North to this Union is the annual tribute it draws from the South—if this be the only cement which keeps this Union together, then it is but of short duration.

If there be danger to this Union, whence does it arise? Not from the South. It has become very common to speak of southern fanatics. What makes a southern fanatic? Do you call his determination to defend his fireside fanaticism? There is not a southern man who would ever open his lips on the subject of slavery or disunion, if you would cease your assaults. Let the appeals to save this Union be made to those who threaten it. Let them be made to the aggressor—to those who have it in their power at any moment to allay this excitement, by merely abstaining from aggression. I have never believed this Union was in danger, except from timid southerners and treacherous presses. They invite the aggressor to hold on, by their readiness to submit. Does any one doubt, if southern presses and politicians were all to unite in one declaration of resistance, "at every hazard, and to the last extremity," that this question would be speedily settled to the satisfaction of the South? It is no disparagement to the North to say this. If she can get this proviso without danger to the Union, let her do it. But when she perceives that she must choose between the proviso and the Union, I compliment her understanding and appreciate her discretion, without by any means detracting from her gallantry, in supposing

she will wisely take the latter. And if the North should prefer the Wilmot proviso to this Union, is there a southerner who will say, in that event, that this Union is worth the effort to preserve it?

Again, sir: If all the presses and politicians of the South were as some I could name—if all the Representatives from the South had come here with a protest in one hand and a declaration of submission in the other, the Wilmot proviso would long since have passed, and every other threatened aggression would soon receive the sanction of Congress. I say it without fear of contradiction, that nothing has arrested these contemplated outrages—nothing can prevent their ultimate perpetration, and with it southern humiliation and ruin, but the firmness and decision of those who are assailed by the false and timid as the disunionists of the South. Sir, in times like these I warn my countrymen against the counsels of superannuated statesmen. They are not equal to the occasion—their cravings and wants are rest and quiet. Our revolutionary movements were conducted by men not even in the prime of life, and they built up the monuments of their imperishable fame while young, bold, and ardent. Had they resorted to octogenarian counsels, there would have been

no revolution, no independence. For myself I laugh to scorn the charge of being a disunionist. The liberality, equality, and honor of my constituents I raise above all considerations. I say again, I regard the sentiment that this Union is the *greatest* of blessings, and its destruction the *greatest* of evils, as high treason against liberty and human rights—a truculent, groveling feeling, that sickens a manly bosom. Some of our northern brethren have virtually told us they hold the Wilmot proviso at a higher value than the Union, and will insist on it at every hazard. Shall we rate our liberty, our rights, our honor at a less price than this contemptible offspring of fanaticism? Why should we be expected to make so dear a sacrifice to this Union, when it is thought to be of less value than even this bastard offspring of a mock philanthropy?

Sir, there has never been a moment when the North could not put a stop to this excitement of this angry controversy. They can in one day, by a mere act of justice, involving no other sacrifice on their part but merely abstaining from the pleasure of doing wrong—they can reduce this political storm to a wholesome breeze, on whose wings the glad tidings of peace would be borne over the land filling every patriot heart with joy.



